



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

May 25, 2006

For immediate release

- 1. DNR continues Fort Dodge fish kill investigation**
- 2. Beach monitoring begins; swimming advisory policy updated**

DNR CONTINUES FORT DODGE FISH KILL INVESTIGATION

FORT DODGE – Thousands of fish have died following a fish kill discovered Wednesday on Soldier Creek in Fort Dodge, according to the DNR.

A person walking on the Fort Dodge Nature Trail saw several dead fish at a bend in the creek near Snell and Crawford Parks Wednesday morning.

The DNR found dead chubs, minnows, stonerollers, red horse, darters, dace and smallmouth bass. However, the DNR has observed live fish in the creek and has taken water samples.

While the DNR is still investigating the pollutant that killed the fish and the source of that pollutant, it appears to have entered the creek through the storm sewer system. Three storm sewer outlets near Floral Ave., where the fish kill began, drain the northeast quarter of Fort Dodge. Storm sewers drain directly to a stream or lake and do not receive treatment.

The DNR will continue to investigate the source of the fish kill. Anyone with information regarding possible sources of the fish kill should contact the DNR field office in Mason City at (641) 424-4073.

MEDIA CONTACT: DNR Mason City field office at (641) 424-4073.

###

BEACH MONITORING BEGINS; SWIMMING ADVISORY POLICY UPDATED

DES MOINES — As the weather warms and swimming season approaches, the DNR is preparing for its 2006 beach monitoring season.

The DNR takes water samples weekly at Iowa's 37 state park beaches. The samples are compared to water quality standards to determine the risk of waterborne illnesses for swimmers. Monitoring at most beaches will begin the week of May 22 and conclude the week of Oct. 31. Iowans can find the weekly results on the DNR Web site at www.iowadnr.com by clicking on "Beach Monitoring."

"Our monitoring over the past six swimming seasons shows that our state park beaches are safe for swimming the vast majority of the time," said Eric O'Brien, DNR beach monitoring coordinator. "We're looking forward to another successful summer."

From 2000 to 2005, beaches exceeded the geometric mean standard (a type of average calculated using five results over 30 days) less than 8 percent of the time. Beaches exceeded the one-time high standard less than 7 percent of the time.

The DNR has already monitored many state park beaches for a month to gather background data. However, monitoring at all state park beaches begins this week. So far, the beaches monitored in the early 2006 season have exceed standards less than 6 percent of the time.

In addition to state park beaches, 35 county- and city-run beaches have volunteered to participate in the beach monitoring program. These beaches will sample from the week of May 22 through the week of September 4. While weekly monitoring results from these beaches will be posted on the DNR Web site, county beaches *will decide independently* whether or not to post swimming advisories when bacteria levels run high.

State park beaches will post a "swimming is not recommended" sign if:

- The geometric mean exceeds the water quality standard (five samples in a 30-day period exceeds 126 colony-forming units of *E. coli* bacteria per 100 ml of water)
- The beach is classified as "vulnerable" or "transitional" and one sample exceeds Iowa's one-time maximum standard (235 colony-forming units of *E. coli* bacteria per 100 ml of water)

The DNR considers beaches "vulnerable" after two years of high geometric means within a five year period. They are no longer "vulnerable" when this condition no longer applies.

"Transitional" beaches, a new beach class this year, includes beaches where bacteria problems have been resolved or no longer pose a serious threat. Beaches on this list include Lake Darling, Nine Eagles and Emerson Bay. Beaches in this transitional class

may be removed from this list if they do not exceed the geometric mean standard for one year.

“Non-vulnerable” beaches are all beaches that do not fall into the above categories. Beaches that have exceeded the one-time standard two or fewer times during a running five years will be monitored less frequently. These beaches will be monitored on a weekly basis from the week before Memorial Day through Labor Day. All other state-owned beaches will be monitored from April 15 through October 31.

A list of beaches in each category is available at the DNR’s beach monitoring Web site by clicking on “2006 Beach Policy.”

Posting a swimming advisory does not close a beach. However, the DNR reserves the right to close a beach in the event of a documented health risk including things such as (but not limited to) a wastewater bypass, spills of hazardous chemicals, or localized outbreaks of an infectious disease.

MEDIA CONTACT: Eric O’Brien at (319) 353-2835.